



Health, Housing & Community Services Department  
Public Health Officer Unit  
Communicable Disease Prevention & Control Program

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## Health Alert

Viral Respiratory Illnesses Update  
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Due to early and increasing activity of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and influenza in California, as well as an uptick in COVID-19 cases, there is concern over the State's hospital resources. In response, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued an [Early RSV and Seasonal Influenza Health Advisory](#) and an [All Facilities Guidance Letter for Response to Surge in Respiratory Viruses among Pediatric Patients](#).

The City of Berkeley Health Department is requesting that healthcare providers take the following actions to reduce the number of emergency room and hospital visits:

- Encourage patients to receive seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccines and updated boosters, as appropriate
- Counsel patients to take everyday actions that can stop the spread of viruses, including masking; handwashing; covering coughs and sneezes; avoiding contact with the eyes, nose, and mouth; staying away from people who are sick; and staying home when sick
- Maximize efficiency by providing letters as needed for school or work to prevent emergency services from handling these requests
- Avoid referrals to the emergency department for testing, unless the results are necessary for clinical care and decision making
- Work to increase access capacity to address potential rise in outpatient demand for care associated with increased seasonal viral infections

We appreciate your support and partnership in keeping the residents of Berkeley safe and healthy.